

**Principle Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International
Security Policy Joseph McMillan's statement to the press
after the opening session of the Fifth Bilateral Defense Consultations**

Skopje, May 6th 2010

It's great to be here in Macedonia for the Fifth Bilateral Defense Consultations. It is an excellent comprehensive form for the United States and Macedonia to discuss bilateral cooperation, security issues of mutual interest, and to assess both the direction and new opportunities for our strategic relationship. Macedonia has made significant advances since we first held such an event and even since the last time we held this event 15 months ago. This is a testament to Macedonia's dedication to creating a more stable, peaceful world and its willingness to take on responsibilities of a full-fledged ally of the United States. The United States is deeply appreciative of the sacrifices this country makes in providing its contributions toward international operations. Today's discussions will highlight the strength of the Macedonian-American defense relationship and provide a roadmap for the future of our defense cooperation. So again, many thanks to His Excellency, the Minister, and to the entire Ministry staff for hosting us. We look forward to discussions today and for continuing the dialogue on end to the future.